



## LIGHT PICTURES FROM FAR-OFF LANDS. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ESTATE OF ARCHIBALD VÁCLAV NOVÁK<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** Traveller and writer Archibald Václav Novák engaged in a wealth of lecturing and literary activity in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 1930s, with a focus on non-European countries. He drew on his own experiences from his time in the US and Tahiti in 1919–1921 and from his travels around south and south-eastern Asia, China and Japan in 1926–1927. Novák accompanied his lectures in a way that was common at the time – by projecting hand-coloured glass slides. In 2011 868 of them entered the collection of the National Museum as a gift, together with 520 negatives that were used to make them and 12 original negatives from his travels. The existence of source negatives means that in the case of a number of slides it is possible to tell whether and from where they were taken. Using information from Novák's work and from other sources, we can then reconstruct the collections that were used for various lectures and establish how complete they are.

**KEY WORDS:** Archibald Václav Novák (1895–1979), Czech traveller and writer – United States – Tahiti – South Asia – South-East Asia – China – Japan – Korea – travelling – history of photography – hand-coloured glass slides – travel lectures

In 2011 the National Museum acquired, as a gift, the extensive photographic estate of Czech traveller and writer Archibald Václav Novák (1895–1979). The previously-unknown collection of 868 slides and 532 negatives were given to the museum by Novák's grandson. The photographs were put into the photographic collection of the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures.

Archibald Václav Novák was originally a builder by profession, but for most of his active life he earned his living by writing and publishing, and by giving travel lectures. As an author he wrote not just travel books but popular novels and stories with exotic settings. Between 1922 and 1948 he published, in his own publishing house in Dolní

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Mokropsy<sup>3</sup> near Prague, a total of 34 of his own titles.<sup>4</sup> In addition he also published books by foreign authors with similar themes.<sup>5</sup> In his work he made use above all of his experiences from his time in the US and Tahiti in 1919–1921 and from his travels to Asia in 1926–1927. The totalitarian regime after the Communist takeover in 1948 resulted in Novák being entirely excluded from public life, and he disappeared from general awareness as both a traveller and writer. Apart from his books, which survived in library collections or on the shelves of second-hand bookshops, only a small amount of other evidence regarding his activities has been preserved.<sup>6</sup> The newly-discovered collection of slides and negatives is thus a new and unique source of knowledge.

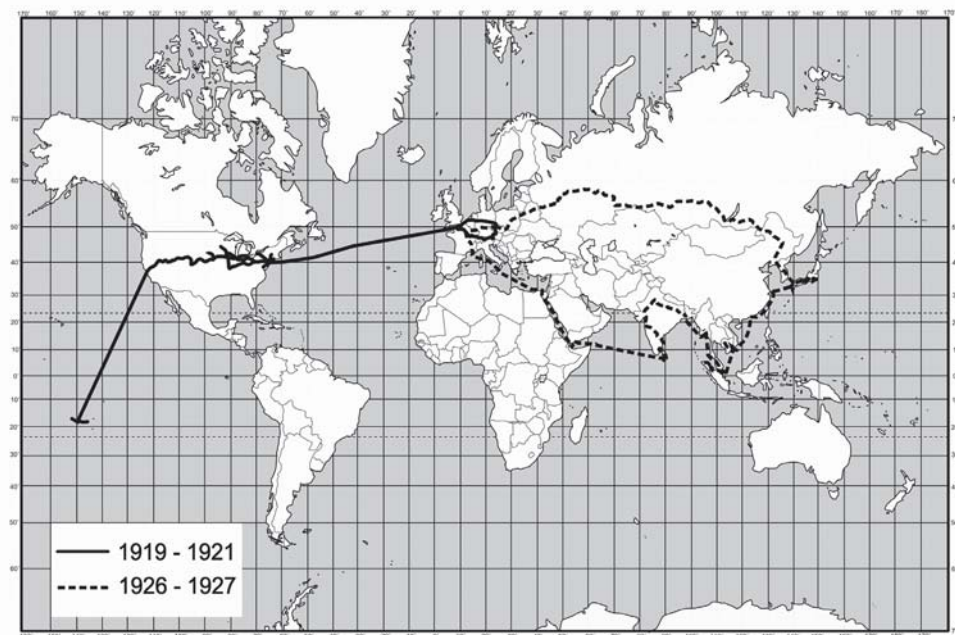


Fig. 01 Map of A.V. Novák's travels (drawn by the author of the article)

## Archibald Václav Novák

A study of Novák's photographic estate would not be complete without an overview of the life of its originator. A knowledge of his life helps us to establish the identity of the photographs and to cast light on their origin and the purpose that they served. Archibald

<sup>3</sup> Originally an independent municipality, since 1950 Dolní Mokropsy has been part of the town of Černošice.

<sup>4</sup> 11 novels, 16 short story collections and 7 books of travel writing.

<sup>5</sup> Authors published by Novák included Santos Khumar Ghose Hazra, Pearl S. Buck, John Paris, Charles Nordhuff, P. G. Wodehouse, Clifford W. Collinson, Pierre Daye and Luis Charles Royer.

<sup>6</sup> The archive of the Náprstek Museum contains a small collection given to the museum by Novák's daughter in 1980. It contains 21 postcards and photographs belonging to Novák himself, and 13 that he was sent by other people. Among them it has proven possible to identify Rudolf Klíma (1899–1985), who lived from 1929 in Tahiti and the Marquesas. See Náprstek Museum Archive, Novák, Václav Archibald collection.

Václav Novák was born on 28 April 1895 in Vodňany<sup>7</sup> in South Bohemia. The youngest of the four sons of a court clerk, he was named Václav after his father.<sup>8</sup> The family had not been in Vodňany for long; his elder brothers Bohumil František (born 1887), Miroslav Václav (born 1888) and Eduard (born 1890) were born in Beroun in Central Bohemia.

Novák's childhood was marked by two serious events. Shortly after he was born, his father died and the family found itself in financial difficulties. Then, at the age of five, Václav Novák lost his left eye in an accident. His education did not at first suggest in any way that he would become a writer and traveller. After finishing elementary school he was apprenticed from 1909 to 1912 to Vodňany builder Václav Tomsa. After that he moved to Prague, working on buildings during the summer and studying at construction school in the winter. He worked in building firms as a technical employee, draughtsman and designer, later even being put in charge of supervising construction projects.<sup>9</sup>

When the First World War broke out in 1914 Novák did not have to go to the front, but the ever-worsening economic and political situation still made a marked impression on him. The period of the First World War also saw significant changes in his personal life.<sup>10</sup> In 1915 he met bank clerk Marie Hohausová and a year later they were married. The young couple were more and more affected by the worsening economic situation. It was at this time that Novák started to consider moving to an exotic country, far away from war and hunger. Under the influence of reports on the activity of Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880–1919) his goal became Tahiti. Štefánik had founded an astronomical observatory there in 1911<sup>11</sup> and after the war Novák planned to get in touch with Štefánik and offer him his aid. The plan was thwarted by Štefánik's tragic death in a plane crash as he was returning home on 4 May 1919. Novák decided he would at least set out in Štefánik's footsteps to Tahiti and find out what state the observatory was in and whether its activity could be restarted. The tragic death of his four-month-old daughter Libuše in January 1919 further contributed to his desire to leave.

His plan was to go first to the United States, where he intended to stay for a while and earn money with which to travel on to Tahiti. He was not the first person in the family to visit the US – two of his elder brothers had left for the US before the First World War. Eduard Novák, a locksmith, arrived in New York on 7 August 1911, and his

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<sup>7</sup> State district archive in Třeboň, birth records for the Roman Catholic parish in Vodňany, vol. 20, fol. 193 (485)

<sup>8</sup> It was not until later that Novák started to use the artistic name Archibald, clearly during his stay in the US. He usually gave his name in the shortened form A.V. Novák. The letter A is sometimes interpreted as „architect“.

<sup>9</sup> According to his vocational certificate and employment record from 1913–1919, private archive.

<sup>10</sup> Evidence of this comes from the autobiographical novels „Journey Through Youth“ and „Lost Paradise“, which he published with a gap of two decades between them. In literary style he describes his life during the First World War in Prague and his stay in the US and Tahiti. The books also contain highly personal information, since Novák describes his opinions and his amatory experiences. The correctness of some facts can be verified in the sources (e.g. the information regarding Novák's wedding). Other facts cannot be verified, but seem probable.

<sup>11</sup> The Slovak astronomer, pilot and politician Milan Rastislav Štefánik set out for Tahiti on 18 May 1910. The aim of his stay was to observe the course of Halley's Comet between the earth and the sun. For the purpose, he set up an provisional observatory on a hill above the town of Papeete, later expanding it to include a meteorological station.



Fig. 02 Portrait of A. V. Novák and his wife Marie, probably taken around 1916. Negative 9×15 cm. NM-NpM, inv. no. Ev I 14. The photograph was retouched for the publication of a portrait of Novák in his book *Tahiti, Paradise Islands of the Southern Seas*.

brother Miroslav, a barber, on 10 July 1914.<sup>12</sup> Václav, the youngest, chose a more unusual way to earn his living – he decided he would lecture to Czechs and Slovaks living in the United States about the situation in the Czech lands during the First World War and the creation of Czechoslovakia.

He set out with his wife in September 1919, travelling first via Paris to the port of Le Havre and then by boat to New York. At first things did not go entirely as he had hoped. Representatives of expatriate organisations were initially wary of him, and there was no interest in his lectures. Novák and his wife had to turn their hand to various occasional jobs. Gradually, however, he managed to build up contacts with expatriate organisations and to hold lectures, first in New York and its surroundings and then in other cities. His wife stayed in New York, where on 25 December 1919 she gave birth to a son, Václav. They stayed in the US for a whole year, and it was not until autumn 1920 that Novák, his wife and their nine-month-old son set out on the next part of their journey. First they took the train across the US to San Francisco, and from there a boat to the island of Tahiti. There, too, things did not go quite to plan. The observatory above Papeete turned out to be abandoned and empty. Štefánik had taken all his instruments with him when he left Tahiti. The wooden building was overgrown with vegetation, and restoring it was not realistic. Their plans to stay long term on Tahiti did not materialise, either. The Nováks realised that Tahiti was not the idyllic paradise of which

<sup>12</sup> Digitalised records of passengers are available on the website <http://ellisland.org> (registration needed).



Fig. 03 A. V. Novák with his wife and children in front of their house in Dolní Mokropsy (now Černošice), 1922. Negative 9×15 cm. NM – NpM, inv. no. Ev I 13a

they had dreamed in the Czech lands. In addition to the natural beauty of the tropics and the hospitality of the local people, they also found the growing influence of Western civilisation and of Chinese immigrants. They were not able to obtain a piece of land for their own farm. Thinking, too, of the future of their son, the Nováks decided to return. In the end their stay on Tahiti had lasted three months. In addition to Tahiti, Novák visited the neighbouring island of Moorea, and the islands of Huahine, Raiatea, Tahaa and Bora Bora. At the invitation of a French official, Štefánik's friend Amédet, he also visited the atoll of Anaa to see the pearl fishers.

Their return journey was via the States again, where Novák wanted to earn money for the journey back to Czechoslovakia by giving lectures. On arriving in San Francisco he sent his wife and son on ahead to New York while he set out on a lecture tour around Czech settlements in Omaha and Nebraska. The tour was not very successful, however, and what he earned hardly covered his costs. He had more success in Chigaco. Finally, after a further half year, the Nováks were able to return home.

On their return the Novák family settled in a villa in Dolní Mokropsy near Prague. Novák gave further lectures, this time about his impressions from his time in the US and Tahiti. He also launched his literary and publishing career, founding the Publishing House of A.V. Novák, Traveller. He published popular short stories and novels inspired by his time in the US and above all French Polynesia. The love stories, with their marked erotic elements and captivating descriptions of the setting and characters, became



popular with readers. Novák's most successful book, *Stories from Tahiti, Islands of Sinful Love*, was published in seven editions between 1922 and 1948. In addition Novák also published travel writing with his own observations from his journeys.

The success of his lectures and books allowed him to undertake a further journey in 1926-27. This time he travelled alone, partly because shortly after their return his wife had given birth to a daughter, Jiřina. The goal of his journey was also different – Novák wanted to gain new material for his lectures and books. His destination was Asia.

He set out in autumn 1926 via Paris to the port of Marseilles, from where he travelled by boat via Port Said through the Suez Canal, with stops in Djibouti and Aden, to the island of Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). He stayed in the capital, Colombo, and visited the coastal settlements and the historical city of Kandy. He then set off north, by ferry over the straits to India. He continued by train across southern India to Bombay. Thanks to the Czech consul Augustin Lafar and other Czechoslovaks<sup>13</sup> Novák was able to visit local places of interest. From Bombay he continued, again by train, via Jaipur to the capital, Delhi, and from there to Agra, where he visited the famous mausoleum of the Taj Mahal. He also stopped in the holy city of Benares (Varanasi) on the river Ganges, and at the Buddhist pilgrimage place of Bodh Gaya. He ended his travels around India in Kolkata.

Novák celebrated Christmas 1926 on board the English ship Endavana on his way to Malaysia. A stop in the port of Rangoon enabled him to see something of Burma (present-day Myanmar). He started his travels around Malaysia in the port of Georgetown on the island of Penang. He had originally planned to travel south over dry land, but heavy rains and flooding forced him to choose to travel by boat along the coast to the port of Sweetenham. From there he continued to the capital, Kuala Lumpur. He ended his journey along the Malayan peninsula in the port of Singapore. His next destination was the island of Sumatra, specifically the city of Medan and the mountain resort of Brastagi (Berastagi) near Lake Toba. Novák was most interested in the Batak, a ethnic group living in this area.

From Sumatra Novák returned to Singapore, where he decided in which direction he would go next. He was tempted to visit Borneo or New Guinea, and he also considered a trip to Siam (present-day Thailand) but in the end chose to go by boat to French Indochina (now Vietnam and Cambodia). After a short stay in Saigon he travelled by bus for over 550 km to Phnomh Penh and the temple complex of Angkor Wat. On returning to Saigon he sailed for China, which he was very keen to visit. After a stop in Hong Kong he disembarked in Shanghai. However, it turned out not to be a good time for a visit. China was in turmoil, a strike was going on in Shanghai and shooting could be heard from the suburbs. The Czechoslovak consulate had been evacuated. Novák left Shanghai, and sailed to Japan. His visit to Japan was the high point of his whole Asian journey. Novák spent two months there, from February to April 1927. He started his journey around Japan on the island of Kyushu, at the spa by the thermal springs near Nagasaki. He continued by train and ferry to the island of Honshu, to Shimonoseki and Hiroshima with a stop at the well-known shrine of Miyajima. There then followed a journey by boat to Kobe, where he made contact with the Japanese friends of Czechoslovak legionaries. From Kobe he took numerous short and long trips to Osaka, Nara, Kyoto, Kamakura, Hakone and the environs of Lake Biwa. He stayed for several days in Tokyo, where he met the Czechoslovak envoy

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<sup>13</sup> Novák remembered the commercial attaché Strakatý, his friend Lvovský and countrymen Ing. Krump and Dr. Pirling. See NOVÁK 1931b, pp. 144 and 151.

Švagrovský and secretary Fierlinger. The culmination of his Japanese travels was his visit to the city of Nikkō. The end of his Japanese trip, after his return to Kobe at the start of April, came during the celebrations of the blooming sakura trees. From Japan he travelled via the Korean peninsula and Manchuria to Harbin, and from there by the Trans-Siberian Railway across the then Soviet Union to Moscow. He returned home via Warsaw. On his return from Asia Novák used the knowledge he had acquired in order to create new lectures and books. Besides further novels and short stories, he published a four-volume travelogue of his stay.

In addition to his literary and lecturing activity, Novák was also politically active in the 1930s. He was a member of the municipal council in Dolní Mokropsy, and shortly before the Second World War, on 25 May 1938, he was elected mayor, an office which he performed conscientiously until the end of the war. Several times he faced anonymous denunciations, and it was only through luck that he avoided arrest.

After the liberation of Czechoslovakia Novák continued his publishing and writing activity. The turning point came with the political takeover in 1948, when the Action Committee of the National Front banned him from public life entirely. The dissolution of private publishing houses in 1949 meant an end to Novák's publishing business. In later years Novák lived in forced seclusion, struggling with both financial and health problems. Despite all his attempts, he never again had a career as a writer. He died on 8 August 1979 in the hospital in Třebotov, and is buried in the graveyard in Černošice.

## **The photographic estate**

The photographic estate of Archibald Václav Novák, given to the National Museum in 2011, consists of 868 glass slides. 520 negatives designed for the production of slides, and 12 celluloid negatives of 9 x 14 cm. These last ones are the only photographs that were taken on his actual travels. The negatives for the production of slides are only reproductions of photographs, postcards and illustrations. The glass slides create series designed for various lectures, and they come from various periods. They consist of two pieces of glass – one with emulsion, one covering – stuck together with a black paper strip. The great majority of the slides are hand-coloured.

## **Negatives from travels**

The 12 celluloid negatives in the format 9 x 14 cm are the only negatives that A.V. Novák took when actually on his travels. They represent only a fraction of the extensive photographic, and even film, documentation of the Nováks' travels. His travel writings contain mentions of what he photographed and where. On his journey to Asia in 1926–27 he was equipped not just with a still camera, but with an Ica travelling ciné-camera with a spring motor drive.<sup>14</sup> His extant travel writings contain countless mentions of what he photographed and filmed and where. He later showed the films at his lectures. Unfortunately, however, neither the films nor most of the original negatives have been preserved. The negatives that have entered the photo collection of the Náprstek Museum were taken in several places. Three of them show Aden: a view down the street at the clock tower Big Ben Aden (inv. no. As I 8835), a street view with boys posing (inv. no. As I 8836) and a camel market (inv. no. As I 8837). There is one from

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<sup>14</sup> NOVÁK 1932b, p. 27.

Ceylon (elephants by a river, inv. no. As I 8844) and one from India (a Jain temple in Kolkata, inv. no. As I 8842). Two photographs come from Burma. The entrance gate to the Golden Pagoda precinct in Rangoon can be precisely identified (inv. no. As I 8841), but in the case of the temple with a station in the background (inv. no. As I 8843) the precise location cannot be specified. Novák seems to have taken this photograph on a train journey from Rangoon to the countryside. Two of the negatives preserved were taken in Cambodia: the entrance gate to Angkor Thom (inv. no. As I 8845) and the view of Angkor Wat (As I 8846). Three photographs were taken in places that cannot be identified – they show a path lined with palm trees (inv. no. As I 8838), a fig tree (inv. no. As I 8839) and a view of a wide river (inv. no. As I 8840).

## **The slides and the negatives used to produce them**

The largest part of Novák's photographic estate consists of slides and the negatives used to make them. Travel lectures accompanied by the projection of slides, known as „light pictures,” were very popular in Bohemia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the general public they were often the only way in which they could learn about far-off countries. For the lecturers they formed a significant source of income. The Náprstek Museum's collections contain a large number of slide collections that accompanied the lectures of Enrique Stanko Vráz (1860–1932), Bedřich Machulka (1875–1954), Richard Štorch (1877–1927), Joe Hloucha (1881–1957),<sup>15</sup> Josef Ladislav Erben (1888–1958), Barbora Markéta Eliášová (1874–1957) and others. The most extensive collection of slides in the Náprstek Museum's photos does not come from an individual, but from an institution – an extensive collection used for lectures at the Agricultural College.

Lecturers had slides made by specialist companies.<sup>16</sup> The colouring was provided by the manufacturer – art school students were often hired for the work. The level of colouring thus varies from the very precise to the simple colouring of a photograph with several colours. The colour depended on the imagination of the colourist, or in some cases on the orders of the customer.

Among Novák's slides several collections can be specified as coming from various periods and being designed for various lectures. The various collections have been preserved to greater or lesser degrees – some have been preserved in their entirety and with the original order of the slides intact, while others are mixed and incomplete. In chronological order we can identify fragments designed to accompany lectures on the First World War and the creation of Czechoslovakia (70 slides), a disordered group from various lectures on the US (42 slides) and Oceania (323 slides), a complete collection that accompanied a lecture on his visit to Malaysia and Sumatra (150 slides), an almost complete collection accompanying a lecture on his travels in Vietnam and Cambodia and his return via Korea and Siberia (115 slides) and a complete collection accompanying a lecture on China and Japan (155 slides). The remaining slides (13) were either used to promote Novák's books, or they had a specific function within the lectures (slide with a decorative inscription saying „Welcome“ and „Interval“).

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<sup>15</sup> 142 coloured slides that belonged to Joe Hloucha were published on CD-ROM „Joe Hloucha and the collections of the Náprstek Museum, ISBN: 978-80-7036-257-0.

<sup>16</sup> On slide inv. no. AO II 1856 a label has been preserved with the producer's stamp: FOTO - VÁŠA PRAHA Žitná 3 – see plate 1.



The negatives that were used to create slides form a special chapter. It is relatively rare that they have survived – in museum collections we mostly find collections of slides only. These negatives feature a wooden background photographed with the subject adjusted using drawing pins or tacks. In a number of cases the slide that corresponds to the negative can be found. The scene on the slide is cut off, while on the negative the wider surroundings of the original picture can often be seen. In some cases this enables us to establish the specific source of the picture. On some of the negative the traces of a greasy pencil can still be seen on the emulsion itself indicating the cutting lines and in some cases also handwritten notes for the colourist (see plate 2). They mostly concern the colour of clothing or fruit, for example in the case of a photograph of two Batak women there is a note saying “dark blue clothes” (inv. no. As I 8936), on a photograph of a Malayan tapir a note saying “grey-brown animal” (inv. no. As I 8955), by a branch with the fruits of the mangosteen “Fruits a dark crimson red” etc. It is unique evidence of the way in which the colouring of the slides took place, and how the customer affected the resulting colour of the picture. The negatives that have been preserved with the model have a further significance: where the corresponding slide has not been preserved, they preserve pictorial information that would otherwise have been lost.

The number of negatives that have been preserved for each collection will be stated in each of the following sections. An exception among the glass negatives is formed by 9 photographs (inv. no. Ev I 6 – 12, Ev I 13a, Ev I 13b), which were not meant as models for slides. They are shots of A.V. Novák, his wife and children by their house in Černošice in 1922.

## The First World War and the creation of Czechoslovakia, the beauties of Czechoslovakia

Novák prepared his first slide lecture before he left for the US in 1919. Its main subject was the First World War and the creation of Czechoslovakia. For expatriate Czechs overseas he added a group of photographs showing significant towns and places of natural beauty in Czechoslovakia, and folk costumes. He gave the lecture in several Czech towns first before his departure. One of them was Rokycany, where an advertisement in the local paper announced: *„Mr V. Novák, architect, of Prague, will lecture in Rokycany on the liberation of the Czecho-Slovak nation on Saturday 9 August at 8 o'clock in the evening at Střelnice before his departure on a promotional tour to North America. The lecture will be accompanied by 250 light pictures of the horrors of war, our revolution, the arrival of President Masaryk and all the other celebrations in Prague, and further of the beauties of Prague, the Czechoslovak homeland and folk traditions. Entrance: seat type I 3 K, seat type II 2 K, standing 1K, children and students 50h. Tickets on sale in the Trades Bank.”*<sup>17</sup> The advertisement makes clear both the contents of the lecture and above all the number of accompanying slides.

Novák also gave the lecture in the Geographical Institute in Paris<sup>18</sup> and then repeatedly in the US. The slides somewhat complicated his arrival, since at customs in New York he had to pay 30 dollars for them in customs. It is very hard to ascertain the number of lectures that Novák gave in the US. According to his own information there were hundreds of lectures in dozens of towns and villages.

<sup>17</sup> Žďár, vol 18, no. 31, p. 2, Rokycany: Karel Horký 2. 8. 1919.

<sup>18</sup> See NOVÁK 1934a, p. 27.

A total of 72 slides have been preserved from the lectures on the creation of Czechoslovakia, around a quarter of the original number. They do not form a complete group, but are fragments covering all the subjects on which Novák lectured. Some slides have their original numbers and labels. Five photographs of captured legionaries or alleged spies being executed are related to the wartime repression. A series of 19 slides captures the return of the legionaries, the arrival of the first Czechoslovak president T. G. Masaryk in Prague on 21 December 1918, the ceremonial procession through Prague and the military review at the Invalidovna in Prague. Events in Slovakia are represented by a picture from the celebrations in Bratislava on 4–5 February 1919. In addition to T. G. Masaryk the people featured on the slides include French envoy Louis Frédéric Clément-Simon (1873–1934, inv. no. Ev II 5) and the chairman of the defence committee, later defence minister, and prime minister František Udržal (1866–1938, inv. no. Ev II 4). Of these slides only two are coloured,<sup>19</sup> the rest being black and white.

Thirty photographs of towns and the landscape have been preserved, all coloured. Ten of them show Prague: there are overall views of the town and of important Prague buildings (the church of St. Nicholas in Malá Strana, the Loreta, Michna's Summer Palace known as America,<sup>20</sup> and the monument to František Palacký). Of interest are two views of the interior of the Cathedral of St. Vitus and the Vladislav Hall in Prague Castle.

Other towns represented are Tábor, Jičín, Hořice and Strakonice, while monuments include Karlštejn castle, the chateau of Hluboká (two photographs – the exterior and the interior) and the castle of Strečno in Slovakia. Landscapes include the river Vydra in the Šumava, sandstone rocks in Český ráj, the Krkonoše mountains and the High Tatras. Czech industry is represented by a picture of the iron works at Králův Dvůr. In the case of a few photographs it has not been possible to identify the locality.

Sixteen coloured slides show folk costumes; five of them were probably taken during celebrations of the end of the First World War. The others are photographed postcards or illustrations. The photographs of Czech girls are said to have met with the greatest success among American audiences.<sup>21</sup>

There are no corresponding negatives for any of the above-mentioned slides from lectures on the creation of Czechoslovakia. The only negative that might have been a model for a slide from these lectures is a re-photographed portrait of M. R. Štefánik (inv. no. Ev I 15). There is no corresponding slide for it, however, and so it is not clear whether this negative was the model for a slide, or whether it served only for publication purposes.<sup>22</sup> A negative that does appear to have been used only for publication purposes was a retouched negative of a double portrait of Novák and his wife (inv. no. Ev I 14).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Inv. no. Ev II 8 – T. G. Masaryk on Wenceslas Square and Ev II 20 – war graves.

<sup>20</sup> Now the home of the Antonín Dvořák Museum.

<sup>21</sup> In his book *A Globetrotter's Notes* Novák remembered a lecture in Baltimore, where the audience reacted with shouts and whistles to pictures of Czech girls welcoming legionaries. Novák thought they were trying to spoil his lecture, and told them firmly to be quiet. It was not until after the lecture that he learned it had been an expression of enthusiasm. Novák used the anecdote to illustrate the difference between the European and American character (NOVÁK, 1924, pp. 69-70).

<sup>22</sup> The same portrait is used in Novák's brochure on Štefánik (NOVÁK, 1920 and also in Novák's book *Tahiti, Paradise Islands of the Southern Seas* (NOVÁK, 1923)).

<sup>23</sup> It served as a model for the portrait of Novák in the book *Tahiti, Paradise Islands of the Southern Seas* (NOVÁK, 1923).

## The US and Oceania

Shortly after his return to Czechoslovakia Novák resumed the lecturing activity that had been successful in the US. Evidence of it comes not only from numerous advertisements in the press of the time, but also from a slide publicising a lecture by Novák entitled *From Paris via North America to the tropical islands of the Pacific Ocean*. The lecture took place only a couple of months after Novák's return, on 29 November 1921 in the large hall in Prague's Lucerna building. The advertisement promised 250 magnificent pictures (inv. no. Ev II 61). This was, of course, just one of the many lectures that Novák gave from 1921 onwards throughout Czechoslovakia. It is once again hard to ascertain the precise number of lectures and places visited. Advertisement in the press of the time show that Novák had created several lectures, with various titles and pictorial accompaniments. In addition to the lecture in the Lucerna mentioned above, further lectures were entitled *In the footsteps of General Štefánik in Tahiti, the tropical islands of the southern seas*,<sup>24</sup> *the coral Leeward Islands in the Pacific Ocean*,<sup>25</sup> *American work*,<sup>26</sup> *Czech and Slovak settlements in the United States*,<sup>27</sup> *French Pacific colonies*,<sup>28</sup> *Native life in Polynesia*,<sup>29</sup> *Customs and life of the natives on tropical Islands*<sup>30</sup> and *Tahiti, tropical islands of the southern seas*.<sup>31</sup> This list is certainly not complete.

In addition to these advertisements, we have an interesting personal reminiscence by one of the attendees. František Jeřábek, who attended a lecture by Novák on 31 March 1924 in Brno, later wrote the following: *Naturally, I attended Novák's lecture in Brno, which was advertised in the newspapers. The Sokol hall was full to bursting. A pleasant man of about thirty, dark-haired and slender, with a moustache, an architect by profession but otherwise a traveller and writer, Archibald Václav Novák accompanied his lecture with almost two hundred light pictures. His engaging description that evening of his journey to Tahiti created a perfect illusion those far-off island worlds, from which we, too, now hear the echo of the free life of our distant ancestors, a sound that still lives somewhere deep in our subconscious, bidding us to come home to a free life in harmony with nature.*"<sup>32</sup>

The lectures on Tahiti remained part of Novák's repertoire in the 1930s, even after his journey to Asia. The lecture consisted of two parts: *Tahiti, Part I. The Paradise Islands of the Southern Seas* and *Tahiti Part II. The Life and Customs of the Natives*.<sup>33</sup>

The photos for these lectures that have been preserved form a disordered whole. With a few exceptions, they do not have labels or numbers, and are not in their original order. The great majority of them are non-original images. In a few cases, particularly where the negative used to create them has been preserved, it is possible to ascertain the source, or the original author. Again, in a few cases information from Novák's travel

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<sup>24</sup> Národní politika vol. 39, no. 323 (afternoon ed.), p. 5, 24.11.1921.

<sup>25</sup> Národní listy no. 22, Prague, 22.1.1922, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Národní listy no. 29, Prague, 29.1.1922, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Národní listy no. 43, Praha, 12.2.1922, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Národní politika, vol. 40, no. 273, Praha 5.10.1922, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> Národní listy vol. 62, no. 278, Praha 10.10.1922, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Národní politika vol. 41, no. 114, Praha 27.4.1923, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Moravská orlice vol. 62 no. 74, Brno 29.3.1924, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> The author of the reminiscence, František Jeřábek (1886–1965) himself lived in French Polynesia and on Christmas Island from 1925–1948. USTOHAL 2004, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> OASA vol. II., no. 2, 15 January 1934, p. 31.

writings or other sources indicates that it was he who took the original photograph. In all the other cases the nature of the coloured slides makes it very difficult to establish the author and source of the photograph.

A total of 44 slides and 58 negatives have been preserved from his journey to and stay in the US. For 8 slides a corresponding negative has survived, while the remaining 50 negatives give an idea of the slides that have not been preserved. The subjects captured on the pictures are various. We learn something about the journey to the US from two pictures of Paris and a view of the interior of an ocean liner. Among the other photos are views of American cities (New York, Chicago, Salt Lake City, San Francisco) and of rural agricultural areas, examples of American industry and modern agricultural methods. A whole series of pictures (negatives and slides) is devoted to the phenomenon of prefabricated houses – Novák was very taken by this form of housing<sup>34</sup> and on his return to Czechoslovakia he had a house like this built in Dolní Mokropsy. He accompanied the lecture with illustrations of various types of prefabricated house, and of the progress of building work day by day. From the surviving negatives it is clear that they were taken from American and Czech catalogues.

Several slides and negatives show America's original inhabitants. Novák met Indians on his second trip to the US, when as part of his lecture tour of Czech communities in Nebraska he visited the Niobara Indian reservation. The surviving negatives indicate that the slides for the lecture were created from photographs of Indians which he bought there.

Oceania is represented by 321 slides and 146 negatives. For 131 slides, a corresponding negative has survived, which means that in a number of cases we can establish the source from which the photograph came. It was ascertained that as well as using several of his own photographs, bought photographs and postcards, Novák drew significantly from the first volume of Georg Buschan's book *Die Sitten der Völker*, devoted to Australia and Oceania, and also from issues of the magazine *National Geographic* from the period.<sup>35</sup> From the information on the negatives, or on the printed pictures from which they were made, we know that the authors of some of the pictures were the photographers Lucien Gauthier, Theodore L. Cleveland, Paul Gooding and Ralph Stock. For one slide the actual model has been preserved: a postcard with the coast of Tahiti and the island of Moore in the background.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand several slides can be identified where the author of the model was A. V. Novák himself. In particular this concerns a series of photographs showing the observatory that Štefánik built – both its exterior (inv. no. AO II 1733, AO II 1734 a AO II 1739) and its interior, with the concrete base of the astronomical telescope (inv. no. AO II 1735, see plate 4). The author of the photograph showing A.V. Novák in front of Štefánik's house was allegedly Marie Nováková. Further pictures taken by Novák can be identified from the book *Tahiti, Paradise Islands of the Southern Seas*. Many pictures from slides are used in it as illustrations, but only in a few cases is the author given.

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<sup>34</sup> Novák wrote admiringly of the possibility of having a house built in a week. See NOVÁK 1925, pp. 20–21.

<sup>35</sup> Novák used almost the entire pictorial accompaniment to Paul Gooding's article *Tahiti: A playground of nature*, which appeared in no. 4 in October 1920, plus a number of photographs from Ralph Stock's article *The Dream Ship* from no. 1, January 1921.

<sup>36</sup> Slide: inv. no. AO II 1815; postcard: Náprstek Museum Archive, Novák, Archibald Václav collection, 1/14-13.

A photograph that is labelled as being by Novák shows a native climbing up a coconut palm (inv. no. AO II 1867) while another, also labelled as by Novák, shows Tahitian girls bathing (inv. no. AOI I 1798). The story of how the photograph of the bathing girls was taken can be found in the text of the book.<sup>37</sup> Description of the circumstances surrounding the taking of a picture provides a further clue that may lead to the identification of a photograph and its authorship. In this way we are able to identify a man at the helm of a boat (inv. no. AO II 1830) as the captain of the vessel on which Novák sailed from Tahiti to the Leeward Islands.<sup>38</sup> However, these photographs taken by Novák himself form a distinct minority compared to those that come from elsewhere.

Given the number of photographs and their content it is clear that what we have is the mixed accompaniment to several lectures. A number of slides relate to places that Novák did not visit, such as Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. The scope of Novák's lectures was clearly not limited to places that he had been to. Since the original order of the photographs has not been preserved, we can form an idea of what was in the lectures from the content of the photographs at least. With the exception of Štefánik's observatory and the port of Papeete, the pictures mostly show the natural beauty of the Pacific Islands and also their original inhabitants. They include both portraits and scenes from the life of the islanders – fishing, preparing food, celebrations, homes. A whole series of photographs is devoted to various types of tropical fruit (banana, mango, breadfruit, vanilla, taro, sugar beet).

## Novák's Asian lectures

Novák continued his successful lecturing activity after he returned from the journey to Asia that he undertook in 1926–1927. Indeed, his main reason for going to Asia was to gather new material for his lecturing and literary activity. The slides for his Asian lectures have survived better, with most of them still retaining their original order number, and in some cases also their description. It is thus possible to identify the original groups, and to a considerable extent to establish the original order of the photos. The identification of the photos is also aided by the travelogues in which Novák described his Asian journey. Compared to his travel writing on the US and Tahiti, which was more a collection of individual episodes and impressions, the Asian works form a coherent and detailed description of the journey. They are also richly illustrated with black and white photographs, which in many cases correspond to slides.

For the purpose of his travel writing Novák divided his journey into four parts, which do not entirely follow on from one another chronologically. In the first part, *Through Ceylon and India*, he described the journey from Marseilles via Suez, Djibouti and Aden to Ceylon and India, in the second, *Through Malaysia to Sumatra*, he described his visit to the island of Penang, his journey south to Singapore and his visit to Sumatra. The third part, *In the Land of the Yellows*, contains a description of his description of his stop in Burma (which preceded his visit to Malaysia), his journey to Vietnam, Cambodia and China and his return home via Korea, China and Russia. His travels around Japan

<sup>37</sup> Novák writes that he had wanted to photograph some girls bathing. However, they saw him and ran away. He persuaded the small daughter of the chief to bring them back. She returned with the most courageous of the girls, and Novák photographed them together in the surf (NOVÁK 1931a, p. 54).

<sup>38</sup> See NOVÁK 1931a, p. 164.



are left out – Novák devoted a separate, fourth volume to them, *Japanese Spring*. A similar division can be seen among the lectures, with the difference that the photographs from China form the introduction to the Japanese collection. Slides for the first part of Novák's travels – Suez, Djibouti, Aden, Ceylon and India – are completely missing, but the other areas are very well represented.

## Malaysia and Sumatra

The slides for the lectures on Malaysia and Sumatra have been preserved in the shape of 147 slides, in an unbroken series numbered from 1 to 144.<sup>39</sup> The group appears to have included two publicity photographs for Novák's books *Nani Sutra* and *Other Tales From Malaysia* (inv. no. As II 2853) and *Adventure in Sumatra* (As II 2854). The last numbered slide captures sunset over Lake Toba in Sumatra – it seems likely that it was the last photograph in the lecture, and that this group is therefore complete.

The order numbers are indicated on paper strips that are glued to the slides. With two exceptions, the order number is accompanied by an original label. However, this does not always tell us a great deal, because it consists of a snippet of the text of Novák's lecture, evidently the place at which the projectionist was meant to switch to another photograph. The original text of the lecture has unfortunately not been preserved, and so we have only snippets of text available to us, of greater or lesser evidentiary value. By way of illustration, here are the labels from the first five slides. (inv. no. As II 2705 – As II 2709):

*1. When, last; 2. It was in December of the year...; 3. One one side we could see; 4. However, even Penang was permeated; 5. The city of Penang did not; etc.*

135 negatives for the slides have survived. They all have corresponding slides, but this does not indicate that the group of photographs was complete. Here, too, it is not easy to establish the authorship of the slides. Unlike the slides of the US and Oceania, illustrations in books and magazines were not used as a source for the illustrations; instead, they were from individual photographs and postcards. In some cases the original label can be distinguished on the negative.<sup>40</sup> In others it is not clear at first sight whether it was a photograph bought on site. They may also have been positives of photographs that Novák took himself. In two cases we have the model photographs available – two photographs from the Archive of the Náprstek Museum. In the case of the photo of a magician's hut from Sumatra we can thus place side by side the original postcard, the glass negative and its reproduction and the resulting hand-coloured slide.<sup>41</sup>

The order of the slides, as preserved, gives a good idea of the content of Novák's lecture. To a large extent it corresponds to the content of his book *Through Malaysia to Sumatra*. The first twenty pictures cover his visit to the island of Penang and the port of Georgetown. There follow photos of the inhabitants of the Malayan peninsula, including representatives of national minorities. A series of 26 slides is devoted to the exotic animals of Malaysia and Sumatra. A reproduction of a postcard of the Sultan of Johor,

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<sup>39</sup> The numbering does not correspond to the number, because numbers 38, 47, 78 and 91 are used twice – once by themselves and once with the letter „a“ (38 and 38a). On the other hand, slide As II 2763 has the original order number „57 – 58“.

<sup>40</sup> For example, in the case of the elephant enclosure (negative inv. no. As I 9088, slide inv. no. As II 2750) it is clear from the negative that it was a postcard with a printed label „8117 Elephant Kraal Tapah“.

<sup>41</sup> Postcard: Archive of the Náprstek Museum, Novák, Václav Archibald collection, no. 10 (see plate 5).

Ibrahim II (1873–1959) with a tiger he has shot forms the introduction to the next part, devoted to the lives of the Malayan rulers. Three pictures show Kuala Lumpur. The next 23 pictures are devoted to agriculture and exotic fruits and vegetables. A rare photograph showing A. V. Novák himself (posing in front of the boarding-house in Klang where he celebrated New Year's Eve 1926, inv. no. As II 2792) opens the last section of photographs from the Malayan Peninsula – his visit to Johor and Singapore. The journey to Sumatra takes up about a third of the whole group. Here Novák devoted most space to the Batak, who live in the area around Lake Toba. The pictures show the Batak themselves, their way of life and the appearance of their homes. A. V. Novák can be seen once again, in a photograph with Batak children (inv. no. As II 2845).

## Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea and Russia

In both his travel writing and his lectures Novák joined his description of his visit to Burma with a description of his time in Vietnam and Cambodia, and his return home via Korea and Russia. Evidence of this comes in the form of a group of 116 slides with the original numbering preserved. Because the original numbers have survived we know that the group is not complete. The series starts with number 2 and ends with 131. The numbers 1, 10, 11, 13, 30, 42, 69, 72 and 111–121 are missing, while the numbers 36, 47, 51 and 52 occur twice. Unfortunately we do not know how many slides there originally were in the group. It is likely that others followed after the last number, 131. The original labels on the slides are similar to those in the previous group – they consist of snippets from the text of Novák's lecture. An amusing exception is a slide showing Novák himself in the courtyard by the main stupa of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon (Rangoon), which bears the laconic label "12. Mr. Me".<sup>42</sup>

A total of 98 slides have a corresponding glass negative. A further eight negatives are evidence that there are slides missing from the group. In some cases the negative makes it possible to precisely identify the source of the photograph. We can also ascertain that twelve photographs of Angkor Wat were taken from a pictorial publication called *Ruines d' Angkor* published by the Nadal photo studio in Saigon in 1925, and that in a number of other cases the photographs are of postcards. In the case of the remaining slides where the glass negative has survived, we can only state that the model was a paper photograph – whether it was a photograph taken by Novák himself or a bought photograph is not always certain. An exception consists of two slides from Burma,<sup>43</sup> the models which are two of the twelve surviving celluloid negatives from the journey. Of the surviving negatives from the journey, these are the only cases in which there is a corresponding slide. Here we can state that it is a photograph taken by Novák.

Despite a certain amount of uncertainty, the original ordering means that the group gives a relatively clear idea of the content of Novák's lecture. The first 16 slides are devoted to his visit to Burma. They show the places that Novák visited (Rangoon, the countryside) and also the local inhabitants. Novák's interest in the life of the inhabitants of the countries he visited is also clear from his travel writing, and from his slides from

<sup>42</sup> Inv. no. As II 2863 (see plate 8).

<sup>43</sup> Specifically, photographs of a stupa with a astation in the Burmese countryside (slide inv. no. As II 2867, negative inv. no. As I 8843 – see plate 6) and the entrance gate to the precinct of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon (slide inv. no. As II 2862, negative inv. no. As I 8841). These original celluloid negatives are not included in the number of surviving corresponding negatives.

modern-day Vietnam, where there are a number pictures of street life in Saigon, traditional crafts and agriculture. Novák was above all interested in members of the Man (Moi) ethnic group. He was taken to see them by car by his fellow Czech Macháček, the director of a brewery in Cho Lon.<sup>44</sup> In two slides Mr. Macháček is shown with his French wife (inv. no. As II 2884 a As II 2896). In total there are 12 slides relating to the Man people. Further photographs show various types of work on plantations.

There are 59 slides relating to Novák's visit to Cambodia. The introduction consists of photographs of Cambodian women, who drew Novák's attention with their short haircuts. There follows a series of photographs showing the capital, Phnom Penh, and its royal palace in particular. In addition to buildings, there are also photographs of royal musicians and dancers, and a portrait of King Sisowath I himself (1840–1927). The main aim of Novák's visit to Cambodia was to visit the temple complex of Angkor Wat. He also devoted considerable space to it in his lecture. A total of 35 slides capture individual buildings and the details of the sculptural decoration.

The close of the lecture was devoted to his return home via Korea, China and Russia. Korea is represented by three slides – a Korean courthouse, opium smokers and a girl carrying a younger sibling on her back. The further course of the journey is illustrated by pictures from Shenyang, Harbin and two unspecified places from the Trans-Siberian Railway. The group ends with two views of Moscow (the Kremlin and Lenin's mausoleum) and a reproduction of a Soviet propaganda poster.

## China and Japan

*The traveller and writer A. V. Novák, the well-known author of „Tales from Tahiti“ and many other books of entertainment and travel writing will give a lecture here on his travels around captivating Japan, the land of the rising sun. The lecture is accompanied by 150 superb light pictures showing the life of the Japanese people in the towns and countryside, and all the beauties of Japan, and in addition with both the author's and Japanese films: 1. From the travels of A.V. Novák in Japan, 2. Miyajima, Japan's most beautiful city, 3. In Tokyo when the sakuras are in bloom.*<sup>45</sup> This enticing leaflet publicised Novák's lecture on Japan. A reproduction of it has been preserved on one of the slides, and gives us a good idea of the content of the lecture. Unfortunately neither the films nor the musical extracts have been preserved, but the collection of „150 superb light pictures“ has survived. There are even slightly more slides – 155, and in addition the above-mentioned reproduction of the leaflet and three advertising slides for Novák's books on Japan. As in the previous cases, the original labels on the photographs are short snippets from the text of the lecture.

The slides, with their original numbering, form a series from 1 to 150. However, some numbers are missing from the group (4, 7, 68, 71, 137), while others are represented twice (8, 40, 67, 70, 112, 119, 120), and in one case two pictures with the same number are further distinguished by a letter (43 and 43a). One slide has the original number, 376, and judging also by the handwriting and the way it is labelled it does not seem to have belonged to the lecture. There are four publicity slides with no number; a photograph of four geishas also has no number (inv. no. As II 3119). This picture is interesting, because it appears a total of three times in the group (also with order number 40 as inv. no. As II 3009 and As II 3010). All three slides are the same, differing

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<sup>44</sup> See NOVÁK 1932, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> National Museum – Náprstek Museum, photo collection, slide inv. no. As II 2968.

only in their colouring (the geishas have kimonos of varying colours). This case is unique in the entire photographic estate of A. V. Novák, and is a good illustration of the way in which the colouring of hand-coloured slides was liable to vary (see plate 7).

A total of 58 glass negatives for the slides on Japan have been preserved. They all have a corresponding slide. With the exception of a photographed page from a school atlas, which was the model for the introductory map,<sup>46</sup> they all show postcards or photographs. Here, too, we may assume that they are mostly not photographs that Novák took himself. Some models can be identified as photographs from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They depicted traditional subjects, were popular souvenirs and were often reproduced. For example, a slide showing Buddhist monks (inv. no. As II 3062) is, according to the negative (inv. no. As I 8888) a re-photographed postcard. The scene depicted appears back in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the form of an albumen photograph of an unknown author labelled *J71 BUDDHIST PRIESTS*.<sup>47</sup>

The first 14 slides cover Novák's visit to China. He was unable to stay there as long as he had originally intended, and in the end he made only a short visit to Hong Kong and Shanghai. The slides show street life in Chinese cities, but also barricades and soldiers in the streets of Shanghai, which at the time of Novák's visit was seething with unrest.

The Japanese section opens with some photographs of Nagasaki, to which Novák sailed from China. In addition to views of the city, the section includes a series of pictures of Japanese children, their games and scenes from school life. Further slides show the spa towns of Unzen and Obama, which Novák visited. Village scenes are then followed by depictions of various forms of agriculture in Japan – rice and tea growing, the breeding of silk worms and the production of silk. The photographs after that illustrate his journey along the Japanese coast, and his visit to the shrine of Itsukushima. The torii gate standing in the sea near the shrine had become one of the symbols of Japan, and Novák did not fail to include two views of it in his lecture slides. Another slide shows Novák himself feeding sacred deer at the shrine of Itsukushima (inv. no. As II 3045). Several photographs are devoted to Kobe, where Novák met the Japanese friends of Czech legionaries.<sup>48</sup>

He continued to Kyoto and Osaka, and visited well-known places of pilgrimage in Nara. The slides illustrating his visits to these places show mainly temples, shrines and other historical places of interest. The rest of Novák's travels in Japan are represented by views of Mount Fuji, a tea plantation in the Shizuoka area, the coastal spa of Atami and Lake Hakone. Sixteen photos are devoted to his stay in Tokyo and his travels in its surroundings (the island of Enoshima, the statue of the great Buddha at Kamakura). Four years before Novák's visit, on 1 September 1923, the Tokyo and Yokohama areas

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<sup>46</sup> Slide inv. no. As II 2969, negative inv. no. As I 8847.

<sup>47</sup> The collections of the Náprstek museum contain two examples of original albumen photographs from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, brought back by Josef Kořenský (1847–1938) from Japan (inv. nos. As III 377 and 176.41). Their format is 22x28 cm. The photograph from which Novák took the photograph was a newer edition of the same photograph in postcard format, as can be seen from the preserved negative, going by the ratio of postcard and pins.

<sup>48</sup> The woman with two children on slide inv. no. As II 3054 may, judging by a description in Novák's travel writings, have been Mrs. Matsuko Tsukihashi of Kobe, who was a nurse during the period of the First World War. She was friends with a Czech legionary, whom Novák knew. However, the identity of the woman in the photograph cannot be established with complete certainty – this is only speculation. See NOVÁK 1932, pp. 120–122.

had been hit by the devastating Kantō earthquake. In his travel writing, Novák expresses amazement at the speed with which the damage had been repaired. Among the slides are two views of Tokyo and Yokohama, destroyed by the earthquake, as well as pictures of newly-built commercial avenues. There are also views of buildings of historical interest such as the emperor's palace and the temple of Zōjō-ji.

The high point of Novák's travels in Japan was his visit to the city of Nikkō. A series of 15 pictures, showing mainly the shrine of Tōshō-gū and the details of its decoration, brings to an end the group of slides relating to Novák's lecture on Japan.

## The second life of the slides

After entering the collections of the National Museum, the slides and negatives from A. V. Novák's estate were cleaned, sorted and put into acid-free paper envelopes. Work then started on digitalisation, which aimed both to document the whole collection and to allow its further use. The glass slides in themselves are no longer used, but quality digital reproductions of them have a wide variety of uses. The hand colouring gives the photographs an unusual and distinctive hue, which is highly attractive and commands attention. A selection of the slides has been presented to the public in the form of the panel exhibitions *Tahiti, islands of sinful love* (a selection of the photographs of Oceania, Náprstek Museum, 10.1.2011 – 28.2.2011) and *A. V. Novák – Temptations of the Tropics* (a selection of photographs from Malaysia and Sumatra, Náprstek Museum 4.7.2011 – 4.9.2011).

Thanks to the exhibition *The Temptations of the Tropics* the National Museum started to work with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Kuala Lumpur, which in 2012 led to the publication of a representative book of photographs, *Temptations of the tropics. A photographic archive to Malaya by A. V. Novák*. The publication contains reproductions of 70 slides from Malaysia and Singapore.

The projection of reproductions of the coloured slides during lectures met with great success among visitors. With the use of modern technology, the slides are once again serving the purpose for which they were created decades ago.

## Conclusion

The hitherto unknown photographic estate of Archibald Václav Novák tells us much about the way in which far-off lands were presented in the Czech environment in the 1920s and 1930s. It is evidence of the way in which the pictorial accompaniment to lectures was created. It became clear that, contrary to our original assumptions, these were not Novák's original photographs, but photographs that he took of other photographs, postcards and illustrations. This finding was made possible above all by the survival of the glass negatives that served to make the slides. In many cases, they allowed us to establish the source from which Novák took his pictures, while in a few cases the instructions for the colouring of the pictures has even been preserved. Several groups of slides for various lectures have been preserved, some incompletely, others completely and in their original order, which allows us to reconstruct to a certain extent the content of the lecture even though the text of it has not survived. Although slides as such have long ceased to be used, digitalisation allows us to use them both for exhibition purposes and to accompany lectures. Their distinctive colouring makes them attractive



pictorial material. With their help, it is possible to revive awareness of the fate of the previously forgotten figure of Archibald Václav Novák and his remarkable activity as a traveller, lecturer and writer.

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Plate 01 Slide with the preserved stamp of the manufacturer, photographer Václav Váša from Prague.  
Slide 8.5×8.5cm, NM – NpM, inv. no. AO II 1856



a)



b)

Plate 02 Negative with preserved handwritten note for the colourist (a) and the resulting slide (b).  
NM – NpM, inv. no. As I 8959 (a) and As II 2780 (b)



a)



b)

Plate 03 Indians from the Niobara area. On the left (a) is a negative with reproductions of bought photographs, on the right (b) the resulting slide. NM – NpM, inv. no. Am I 5882 (a) and Am II 3437 (b)





Plate 04 Interior of M. R. Štefánik's abandoned observatory in Tahiti, 1920. Reproduction of a photograph taken by Novák himself. Slide 8.5×8.5cm. NM – NpM, inv. no. AO II 1735



a)



b)



c)

Plate 05 Magician's hut, Sumatra. a) precursor - photograph 14x10cm (Archiv NpM), b) reproduction - negative (inv. no. As I 8933), c) resulting product - slide (As II 2832)





a)



b)

Plate 06 Pagoda in the Burmese countryside. a) the original negative, taken by Novák (NM-NpM, inv. no. As I 8843), b) the slide (inv. no. As II 2867).



Plate 07 Geisha – negative with reproduction of a postcard and three versions of the hand-coloured slide. NM –NpM, inv. no. As I 8870, As II 3009, As II 3010, As II 3119





Plate 08 A. V. Novák in the courtyard of the Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon (Rangoon). Slide bears the original label „12. Mr Me“. NM-NpM, Inv. no. As II 2863